

from the patch-up Lee Smith outlined in *Fortune* last year to the gradualist scheme offered by Peter Ferrara which calls for government to force people to invest in a "Financial Security Account" or stay in the Social Security system. Free marketeers must oppose both in principle. Only a principled stand has any chance of surviving the lobbying of the American Association of Retired Persons.

In the meantime, we should take care of ourselves and not rely on Social Security, support those who want to change it for the better, warn of the present system's dangers and immorality, and oppose inflationary fix-it schemes and every other intervention in the economy. Advancing lasting solutions based on liberty is the only chance we have of abolishing rip-offs like Social Security.

The Conservative Sanctification of Big Government

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

The most disheartening aspect of the Reagan years has been the Inside-the-Beltway conservative love affair with big government.

Education Secretary William Bennett has been nagging Stanford University for changing its core curriculum. As a cultural conservative, I agree with much of what he says. But am I the only person on the Right who thinks federal bureaucrats have no business telling universities what to teach?

Where are all my conservative friends, who used to denounce federal interference in education, now that Washington is dictating a national curriculum? Or did their denunciations apply only when they weren't doing the interfering?

In December 1980, Ed Meese called the Department of Education “a ridiculous bureaucratic joke.” And he was right. From the day Jimmy Carter established it—as a payoff to the leftist NEA teachers union—it has been an expensive, intrusive, unconstitutional, and centralizing instrument of state power.

The 1980 Republican platform promised to abolish the Education Department, and Ronald Reagan campaigned on the pledge. But—like so much else—both were forgotten when the cash and jobs could be directed to “our” side.

Instead of abolition, we’ve seen distension, with the administration and Congress increasing the Department’s budget from \$10 billion in Carter’s last year to \$22 billion in 1988. The head cheerleader for more spending on “education” (actually, *anti*-education, of course) has been Bennett. At the direction of his ideological control, Irving Kristol, Bennett has lobbied furiously for more spending, and criticized those with a “budget-driven agenda” (i.e. benighted folks who think government already spends too much).

The giant Department of Education runs a complicated array of programs, each with its own budget, its own interest groups, its own bureaucrats, and its own regulatory mandates and prohibitions, which have to be interpreted, explained, and enforced. It is an immense burden on schools and teachers, not to speak of taxpayers.

Bennett—with conservatives rooting him on—has centralized control over teaching methods, teacher selection, pay, promotion, textbooks, and a host of other areas that are none of the federal government’s business. And he has increased the federal bias against private education. It is all reminiscent of the neoconservative Napoleonic “reforms” of French education, designed to support an authoritarian state and force all children into a politically approved mold.

Since liberals have always favored federal control of education, we now have no organized opposition in Washington

to school centralization. Federal control of education has been sanctified, so long as it is used to promote “conservative values” (which presumably don’t include parental control of childrens’ education).

And this is no isolated incident. The same thing has happened with the National Endowments for the Humanities and Arts, the Department of Energy, the Federal Trade Commission, OSHA, EPA, and a host of other agencies. Conservatives denounced them when Carter was in office, but now that they offer jobs and grants for the boys, there isn’t a peep.

Washington conservatives defended Ed Meese until he fired his movement-conservative press secretary. Then they attacked the Attorney General too. How dare he, top conservatives sputtered: that press aide was “one of us.”

Lord Bolingbroke, writing more than 200 years ago, said that politics consists of rewarding one’s friends, punishing one’s enemies, and lining one’s pockets. Nothing much has changed, of course. But there were those who thought the conservatives might be different.

The Case Against Government Child Care

Kathleen M. Spotts

American families need more affordable child care. But the answer is not more government involvement. When child care is run, funded, and regulated by the government, it can only make the existing problem worse. And it’s bad for our liberty as well.

Promoters of more government intervention claim it will make “quality child care” more available to poor and middle-